

# **STA Imagine It!** **TODAY'S OPEN COURT**



**The *Open Court* Legacy  
for Effective Reading Instruction**

## The *Open Court* Legacy for Effective Reading Instruction

### The Beginning:

#### Critical Instructional Strategies and Effective Teaching Tools

The *Open Court Reading* program grew out of the belief that young children should be reading authentic literature as well as expository selections. The authors believed the contrived stories of the basal readers just were not engaging enough. Finding the appropriate literature was the easy part. The challenge was developing the instructional strategies and tools critical to enable children to read literature as early as first grade.

### From Research to Practice:

#### Explicit Phonics and Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Prior to program development, the authors conducted research in the field of beginning reading. All the data pointed to the importance of early and explicit phonics instruction. *Open Court Phonics* put the research into practice with color-coded Sound/Spelling Cards, explicit sound and spelling instruction, and scaffolded blending to teach decoding as well as encoding.

Decodable Books were developed to enable children to apply their skill knowledge, resulting in greater fluency and automaticity.

### From Research to Practice:

#### Essential Vocabulary and Comprehension Skills

Initially, *Open Court* focused on the primary grades. The early successes in teaching beginning reading with *Open Court* were so encouraging that the program was expanded to Grade 6. Again, the authors relied on research, this time focusing on vocabulary and comprehension.

More advanced literature and expository selections were integrated into the units. Vocabulary and critical comprehension strategies, such as summarizing and predicting, formed the foundation of the comprehension instruction.

The addition of a language arts strand integrated writing, spelling, grammar, usage and mechanics into a complete K–6 reading and language arts program.

### Continually Evolving:

#### Meeting Changing Student and Teacher Needs

*Open Court Reading* was field tested to encourage extensive teacher feedback prior to publication. *Open Court* has continued to evolve over the years and the changes in the program have been driven by two key principles: research results and teacher feedback.

From a beginning reading program with literature at its heart, *Open Court Reading* emerged into a comprehensive reading and writing series for students in Grades PreK–6. *Open Court Reading* has been utilized with documented success in schools and districts from a wide range of social and economic realities.

## **Imagine It!:**

### **A Proven Instructional Plan**

*Open Court Reading* has always been known as the program that gets children reading and comprehending at an early age. *Imagine It!* continues that storied history of explicit, systematic instruction across the five areas of reading by providing:

- phonemic awareness through explicit lessons designed to scaffold and support students as they develop the necessary foundational skills to become beginning readers.
- explicit and systematic phonics instruction, using seven steps to teach decoding and encoding skills through the use of highly effective Sound/Spelling Cards.
- vocabulary instruction that puts into practice the latest research in order to teach children the necessary skills to develop the robust vocabulary needed to be successful in school.
- comprehension strategy and skill instruction that scaffolds learning so students will become actively engaged in reading while using research-proven comprehension strategies and skills to monitor comprehension.
- fluency instruction and practice using decodable books, leveled readers, and timed readings to ensure students can read accurately, fluently, and with expression.

## **From *Open Court Reading* to *Imagine It!*:**

### **The Legacy Continues for Today's Classrooms**

*Imagine It!* is the most recent edition of *Open Court Reading*. Like its predecessors, the program:

- relies on research-based instruction, teacher input, and learner verification.
- incorporates wonderful children's literature, including fiction and nonfiction to spark the imagination.
- contains a strong beginning reading strand to give all students equal access to learning.
- provides students with the tools to comprehend what they are reading and the skills to write effectively.

*Imagine It!* is the most explicit, systematic program available to meet the needs of all learners.

**See the proven results of *Open Court Reading* starting on page 8.**



## Revisions that Make a Difference: Educators Know Best

During the development of *Imagine It!* the publisher, SRA/McGraw-Hill, met with core groups of administrators and teachers from across the country. These Advisory Boards met several times over two years to talk about the strengths of the program and the improvements required to meet the needs of today's classrooms.

Feedback from educators indicated that revisions in the nine key areas listed below would make the program more effective and easier to teach:

- Ease-of-use features for better instruction and classroom management
- Practice, extension, and intervention tools
- Increased vocabulary instruction and practice
- Focused and integrated fluency instruction
- A more robust writing strand
- Additional inquiry instruction
- Stronger English Learner support
- Enhanced assessment tools
- A full spectrum of integrated technology

### Ease-of-Use Features for Better Instructional and Classroom Management

- Getting Started lessons were expanded to include assessment and progress monitoring to review and apply previously learned skills, and to set up instructional routines.
- A classroom management system was added to ensure a positive start to the school year.
- New test prep activities at the end of each unit of the Student Reader in Grades 1–6 provide test-taking practice with test-taking strategies.
- Targeted activities in the Teacher's Edition support differentiation of instruction at point of use in all parts of the lesson.
- A user-friendly Teacher's Edition includes easy-to-follow directions, specific icons, and clearly organized lessons.
- Clear identification of the five areas of reading keeps instruction focused and integrated and makes lesson planning easier.
- A review in the final week of each unit was added, as well as time to administer Lesson and/or Benchmark Assessments.

## Practice, Extension, and Intervention Tools

- *Leveled Readers* provide practice in vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency at four levels of instruction: On Level, Approaching Level, Above Level, and English Learner.
- *Workshop Kits* provide specific and targeted activities to meet the needs of all learners. Games are included to offer alternative ways to practice skills.
- Skills Practice components offer practice for each lesson's skill instruction.
- *Reteach* components provide alternative ways to explain and reinforce each lesson's skills and activities for additional practice.
- *Intervention* components supply help for Tier 2 students to participate in the basic program.
- *English Learner* components assist students who are still working toward proficiency with the English language.
- *Challenge Activities* extend practice for Above-Level students.
- *Challenge Novels* in Grades 4–6 extend students' understanding and engage Above Level students.

## Increased Vocabulary Instruction and Practice

- Increased Vocabulary instruction focuses on Tier 2 words.
- A *Vocabulary Warm-Up* before every reading selection preteaches the selection's vocabulary.
- Additional vocabulary practice opportunities are available in the Leveled Readers.
- Expanding vocabulary focuses on Tier 2 and Tier 3 words and is called out throughout the reading of each selection.

## Focused and Integrated Fluency Instruction

- *Leveled Readers* directly support the unit themes, build fluency, and help to differentiate instruction.
- Integrated science and social studies in the *Leveled Science Readers* and *Leveled Social Studies Readers* allow cross-curricular connections in the reading block.
- *Curriculum Connections* cards related to science, social studies, math, and art encourage fluency and “cold reads” with nonfiction.
- Focused fluency instruction throughout the program addresses accuracy, rate, and prosody.

## **A More Robust Writing Strand**

- Increased writing instruction covers all aspects of the writing process.
- Timed writing instruction prepares students for standardized writing tests.
- Grammar, usage, and mechanics is integrated into writing instruction.
- Writing connects to reading with a new feature called *“Reading with a Writer’s Eye.”*

## **Additional Inquiry instruction**

- Pictures of real Concept/Question Boards are included for each unit.
- Specific ideas and activities are provided in the Teacher’s Edition to support inquiry.
- Rubrics are included for all aspects of the inquiry process.

## **Stronger English Learner Support**

- *English Learner Support Guide* preteaches, reteaches, and reviews activities for students at four different levels: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, and Early Advanced.
- *English Learner Support Activities* provide additional practice in phonics, word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, usage, and mechanics.

## **Enhanced Assessment Tools**

- A suggested assessment plan for making Adequate Yearly Progress is provided.
- Lesson assessments include summative and formative assessments based on the five areas of reading.
- Initial screening assessments and Benchmark Assessments ensure ongoing monitoring of student progress.
- Cutoff scores to help identify students at risk for reading failure are provided.
- *Monitor Progress* boxes at point of use throughout the lesson provide specific activities to differentiate instruction and to monitor progress of students who are Approaching Level, On Level, Above Level, or English Learners.

## A Full Spectrum of Integrated Technology

Unlike many other programs whose technology offerings focus on games and practice activities, *Imagine It!* includes enhanced technology components, *all of which are white board compatible*. These include:

- **ePlanner** – Allows teachers online access to print materials. This time-saving tool reduces preparation and planning by giving teachers pre-populated lesson plans and links to Blackline Masters.
- **eTeacher's Edition** – A convenient electronic format provides access to the entire Teacher's Edition.
- **ePresentation** – Presents the main features of the Teacher's Edition in an electronic format to visually enhance instruction.
- **eInquiry** – Challenges students to build their creative and critical skills while learning how to investigate their own questions to find answers.
- **eFluency** – Empowers teachers to monitor students' fluency. Students can record themselves reading passages from the Fluency Readers; teachers may then use the data to calculate fluency scores.
- **eStudent Reader** – Student Reader content comes alive in an exciting, interactive format. The content can be projected in the classroom or viewed at home for homework and to involve parents in student learning.
- **eSkills & eGames** – Provides hundreds of fun, learning-based activities for ongoing practice with key skills in phonics, spelling, writing, and vocabulary.
- **eAssess** – Gives teachers the flexibility to generate customized tests that are quickly and automatically scored and stored. Teachers save time by using or modifying existing question banks, and by using a variety of automatic reports that help track student progress and offer effective remediation suggestions.



## ***Imagine It!* A Proven Foundation for Success**

Imagine being able to impact all students in the classroom—from those who struggle with reading to those who excel at it. Imagine implementing the most proven philosophy for teaching children to read. *Imagine It!* provides a validated foundation for the critical reading instruction students need to become fluent, proficient, and motivated readers.

A true research-based program is one crafted using thoroughly researched strategies. The research base used to develop *Imagine It!* spans more than 45 years – significantly longer than most other reading programs.

The foundational program of *Imagine It!* has consistently proven its effectiveness with diverse populations of students across the country for over four decades. Below are snapshots of success from locations nationwide.

### **The McRae Report: A Comparison Study**

Douglas J. McRae, an educational measurement specialist, analyzed Stanford 9 test scores from the STAR program to determine how successful *Open Court* schools in California have been on measures of reading achievement compared to other schools. The results provide clear and convincing evidence documenting the comparative superiority of the *Open Court* program.

This study focuses on total reading scores from the STAR program for Grades 2 and 3 and compares gain scores in the *Open Court* schools to statewide average gain scores. A total of 293 schools from 41 school districts in California were identified as using *Open Court Reading* as their core program during the 1998-2001 school years. For each of the grade levels included in this study, there were more than 25,000 students. The gain score is defined as the percent of students testing at or above the 50th percentile for Total Reading in Spring 2001, minus the percent of students testing at or above the 50th percentile for Total Reading in Spring 1998, for each grade level at each school.

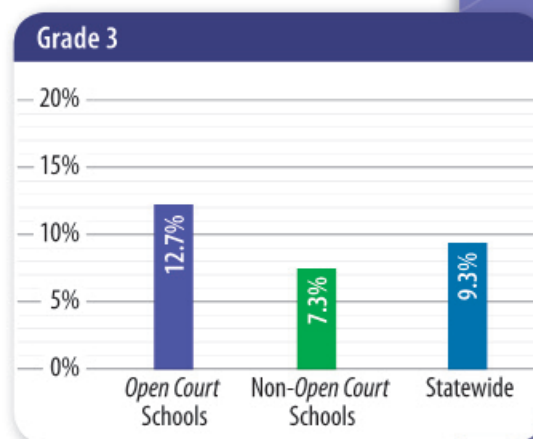
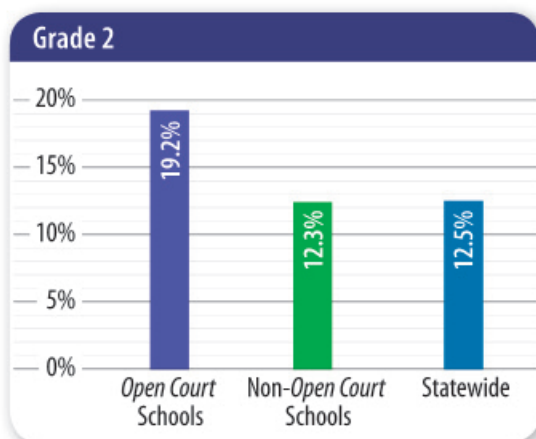
The study also made use of a comparison group of 274 randomly selected schools, chosen to be demographically similar to the *Open Court* group. In addition, it was possible to conduct statistical hypothesis testing for gain score differences involved in this study:

- Differences between *Open Court* school gains and statewide gains
- Differences between *Open Court* school gains and non-*Open Court* comparison group school gains
- Differences between gain scores for several subcategories of schools



## Open Court schools had higher gain scores statewide.

Gain scores for Grades 2 and 3 were calculated for all 5,025 school buildings in California with students enrolled at these grade levels. These gain scores provide a context for the interpretation of *Open Court* gain scores. Statewide, the gain scores for total reading were 12.5% for Grade 2 and 9.3% for Grade 3. For schools identified for this study, the gain scores for total reading in Grade 2 were 19.2% for *Open Court* schools, compared to 12.3% for non-*Open Court* schools. For Grade 3, *Open Court* schools' gain scores were 12.7% while non-*Open Court* schools showed only a 7.3% gain.



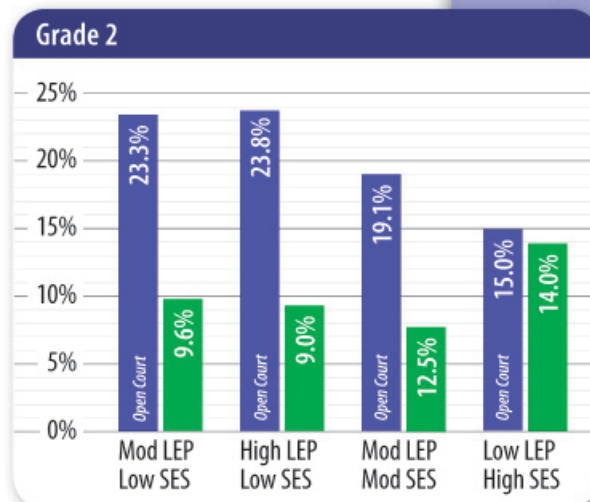
The data in the graph indicate that for Grade 2, the gains for *Open Court* schools were very meaningful. These gains were substantially greater than both the statewide gains and the comparison group school gains. For Grade 3, the *Open Court* gains were meaningful and were also larger than both the statewide gains and the comparison group gains.

## Open Court provided the largest gain scores for schools with high concentrations of both LEP (Limited English Proficient) and Low-SES (Socio-Economic Status) students.

For the categories of schools identified by a cluster analysis, gain scores were available for both the *Open Court* schools and the demographically similar non-*Open Court* schools (comparison group schools).

Results were:

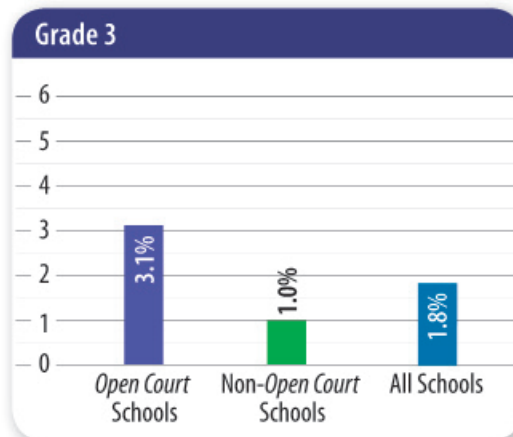
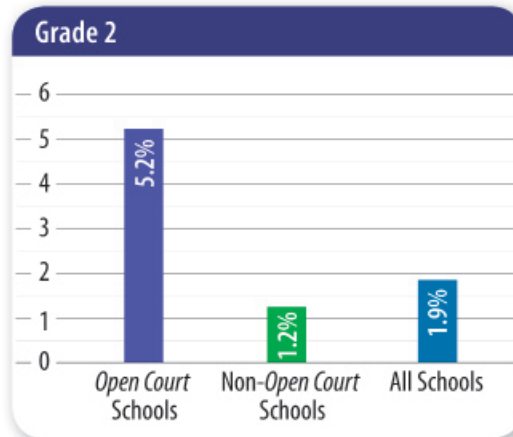
	Grade 2		Grade 3	
	OC	Non-OC	OC	Non-OC
Mod LEP, Low SES	23.3	9.6	13.0	7.4
High LEP, Low SES	23.8	9.0	13.3	5.6
Mod LEP, Mod SES	19.1	12.5	13.6	7.9
Low LEP, High SES	15.0	14.0	11.6	7.2



These data show that the most significant gains occurred in *Open Court* Low SES schools. These data also show that the largest differences between *Open Court* and non-*Open Court* schools occurred in schools with high concentrations of both LEP and Low-SES students.

## A study of more than 700 schools showed *Open Court* schools with higher gain scores than non-*Open Court* schools.

In 2001, the study was expanded to include analysis of 1-year gain scores from Spring 2000 to Spring 2001 for more than 700 schools enrolling 375,000 students. The results show gain scores several times higher for *Open Court* schools, indicating clearly meaningful gains considering the number of schools contributing to the analysis.



### Conclusion: *Open Court* makes the difference

The results of this study provide clear and convincing evidence that students attending schools using *Open Court* materials acquire basic reading skills at a faster rate than students attending demographically similar schools not using *Open Court* materials.

For a full copy of the report, visit [ImagineItReading.com](http://ImagineItReading.com).

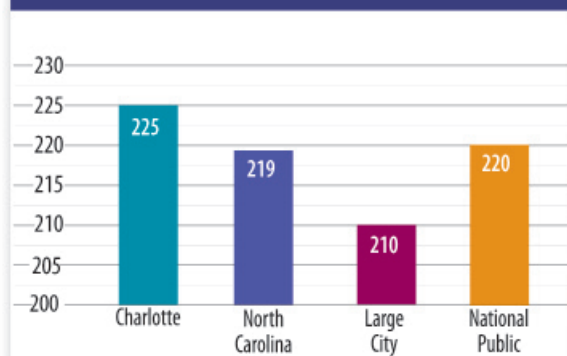
### Celebrates Decade of Success with SRA

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has relied upon SRA's research-based reading and language arts curricula for the last decade, and continues to be an "urban district to watch" for its considerable student achievements.

*Open Court Reading* was officially adopted district-wide by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools at the start of the 2001-2002 school year. During the years that Charlotte-Mecklenburg used *Open Court Reading*, the district's overall End-of-Grade (EOG) reading test scores improved in Grades 3, 4, and 5 each year. In 2005, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools rolled over to SRA's *Imagine It!* reading program, and they continue to be a model for student achievement.

In fact, Grade 4 students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools scored higher than fourth-graders across the nation and in North Carolina on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). CMS Grade 4 students averaged a score of 225 in reading, compared to 220 for the nation, 210 for large cities and 219 for North Carolina.

NAEP 2009 Scale Score Data



### About Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

As the second largest school system in North Carolina and the 18th largest in the United States, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools serve more than 136,889 students, employ about 9,363 teachers, and operate 176 schools. Currently, the district's multicultural student base is 41% African American, 34% Caucasian, 16% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 4% Native American or multicultural. About 50.9% of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.



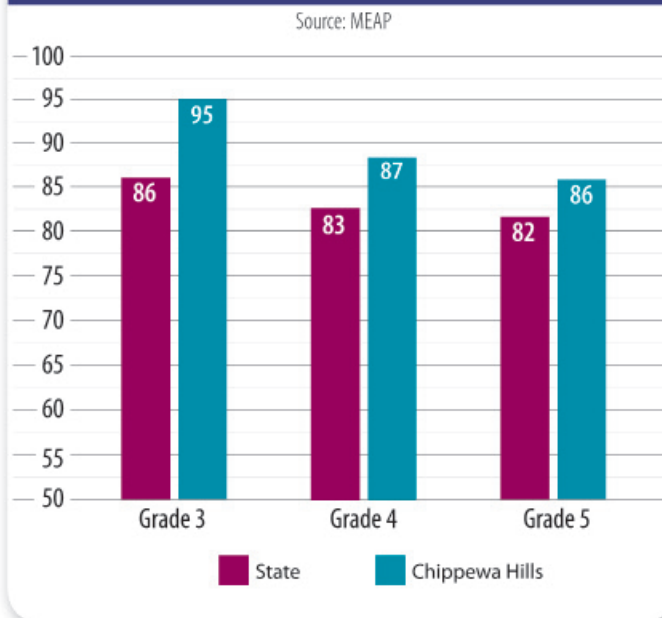
## High-Poverty, Rural Michigan District Committed to SRA *Imagine It!*

Chippewa Hills School District has relied on SRA/McGraw-Hill's literacy curricula since the early 1970s. The structured, phonics-based programs benefit the students, many of whom are high-risk and come to school with limited background knowledge. In fact, more than half of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. After its first year of using SRA *Imagine It!* in Grades K–5 in 2008–2009, the school maintained its consistently high reading scores – with around 90 percent passing.

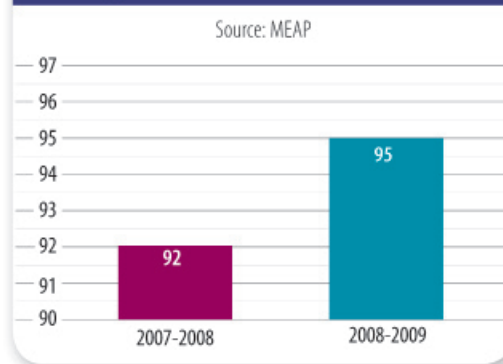
### About Chippewa Hills School District

Chippewa Hills School District serves approximately 2,317 students in Grades K–12 with a student population that is 88% Caucasian, 7% American Indian, 3% African American, and 2% multicultural. Currently, 52% percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Reading in 2008–2009



Percentage of Chippewa Hills Grade 3 Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Reading



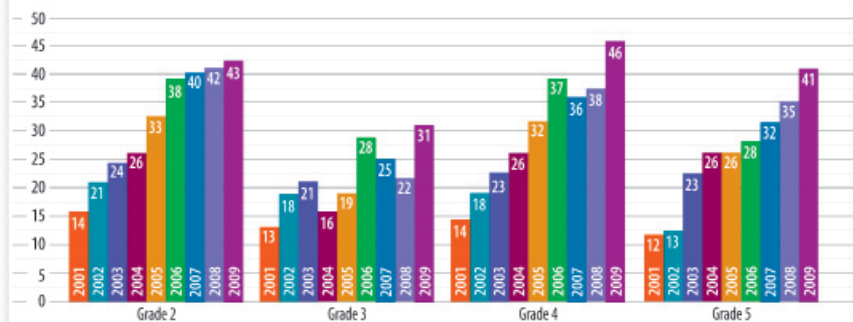
## California District Scores All-Time High After One Year With SRA *Imagine It!*

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District, a culturally diverse community in San Jose, California, scored an all-time high on state reading assessments after its first year with SRA *Imagine It!* In 2009, 40% of Grades 2-5 students scored Proficient or Advanced on the English Language Arts portion of the California Standards Test (CST ELA), six percentage points higher than the previous year.

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District has shown a long-term commitment to SRA/McGraw-Hill's literacy curricula. In 2001, the district adopted *Open Court Reading* district-wide in Grades K-5. Improvements were so impressive that the district implemented SRA's new reading and languages arts program, *Imagine It!* in 2008.

### Percentage of Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced

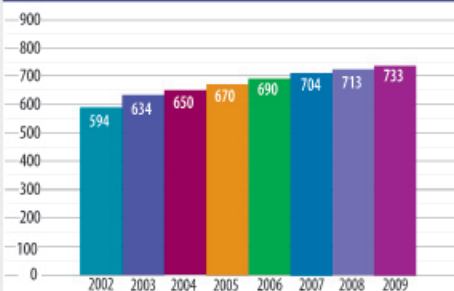
Source: CST English Language Arts



Before the SRA program was implemented, only 13% of students in Grades 2-5 scored Proficient or Advanced on the CST ELA. Each year, that percentage increased. It grew to 40% after just the first year with *Imagine It!*

In addition to higher test scores, the district's Academic Performance Index (API) has increased since SRA's reading program began. The API measures academic performance and progress of California schools and is a numeric index that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. The statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. The program began in 2001, but districts did not receive API scores until 2002. From 2002 onward, Alum Rock's API scores have increased each year, reaching an all-time high of 733 in 2009.

### Alum Rock Union Elementary School District API Scores



## About Alum Rock Union Elementary School District

Serving more than 13,800 students in Grades PreK-8, this district's student population is 78% Hispanic, 10% Asian, 7% Filipino, 2% Caucasian, 2% African American, and 1% Pacific Islander. Ninety percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and 64% are English Language Learners.

### **SRA *Imagine It!* Helps Orlando Students with Disabilities Outperform State Average.**

After seven years with SRA/McGraw-Hill's reading and languages arts programs, Bonneville Elementary School continues to shine. After the first year of instruction with SRA *Imagine It!* students in the Orlando school outperformed the Florida state average in reading. Additionally, students who qualify for exceptional student education (ESE), which is nearly one-quarter of the school's population, have achieved reading proficiency levels as measured by Adequate Yearly Progress since 2005.

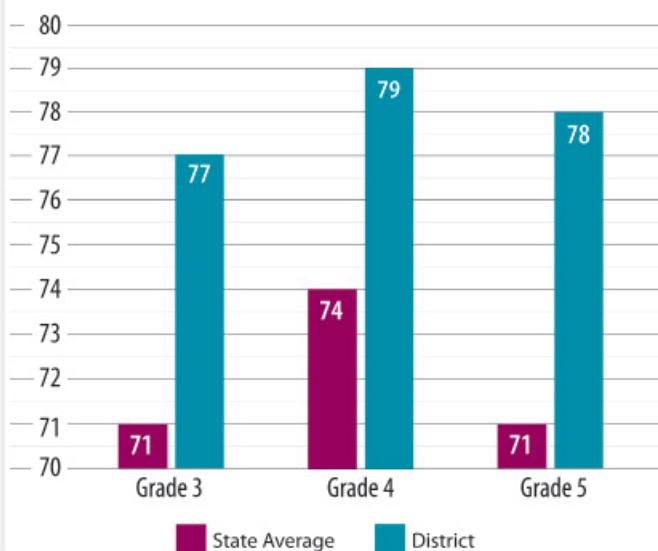
Bonneville Elementary School's implementation of SRA *Imagine It!* began in fall of 2008 in Grades 3–5 replacing an earlier edition of an SRA core reading program formerly adopted for all students in Grades PreK–5 in fall of 2002.

Before adopting SRA's reading program, only 58% of students in Grades 3–5 scored at Proficient or Advanced in reading based on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). In 2009, the success rate of students increased to 88%. In addition, each grade level individually outscored the state average for reading.

### **About Bonneville Elementary School**

Bonneville Elementary School is part of Orange County Public Schools. It serves approximately 550 students in Grades PreK–5. The school's population is 51% Caucasian, 36% Hispanic, 6% multicultural, and 7% African American. Around 62% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 19% are classified as English Language Learners, and 22% are eligible for exceptional student African American, and 2% multicultural. Currently, 52% percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

**Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Reading**



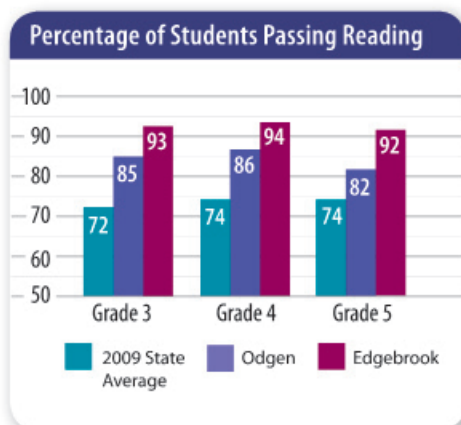


### Chicago Elementary Schools Take the Lead with *Imagine It!*

Many elementary schools in Chicago Public Schools have relied on SRA reading programs for decades. Edgebrook Elementary School and the Ogden International School of Chicago are just two examples of Chicago schools that leverage SRA's *Imagine It!* reading and language series to give their students a lifelong love of reading.

#### Edgebrook Elementary School Differentiates Instruction with *Imagine It!*

The school implemented *Imagine It!* in Grades K-5 during the 2007-2008 school year after using SRA's *Open Court Reading* previously in the lower grades.



As a result, Edgebrook Elementary School's students outperformed the 2009 state average on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test in reading with 93% of Edgebrook's Grade 3-5 students scoring Proficient or Above compared to 73% statewide.

#### The Ogden International School of Chicago

Meanwhile, the Ogden International School of Chicago has also been pleased with the outcomes after implementing *Imagine It!* in Grades K-5 during the 2008-2009 school year after using another program in past years.

Like Edgebrook Elementary School, the Ogden International School of Chicago also performs above the state average, with 91.2% of its students in Grades 3-8 meeting or exceeding state standards for reading as school began in 2010. In 2009, 84% of Ogden's Grade 3-5 students scored Proficient or Above on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test in reading compared to 73% statewide.

#### About Edgebrook Elementary School

Serving nearly 400 students in Grades K-8, this school's student population is 64% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic, 11% Asian, 2% African American and almost 10% multicultural. Twelve percent are classified as low-income and 3% are Limited English Proficient.

#### About the Ogden International School of Chicago

Serving 600 students in Grades K-12, this school's student population is 36% Caucasian, 30% Hispanic, 12% Asian, 10% African American and almost 12% multicultural. Twenty-two percent are classified as low-income and 17% are Limited English Proficient.

# TODAY'S OPEN COURT

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*We've started using SRA's **Open Court Reading** in the 2004-2005 school year because our students were not reaching the level of success they should. I had experience with **Open Court Reading** and many area schools were getting results with it, so with staff agreement, we decided to switch to this research-based program. We felt the explicit, systematic approach would benefit our students. Since implementation, we've absolutely seen results. In 2008-2009 school year we rolled over to the newest edition – SRA's Imagine It! Teachers teach better with SRA's reading program, and in 2007, for the first time,*

**we achieved 100% AYP.** ”

—Wayne Green, Killarney Elementary Principal,  
Orlando, Florida

For more information, call 1-800-334-7344

*[ImagineItReading.com](http://ImagineItReading.com)*

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